

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1, 12, and 14-15 *without prejudice,* and amend claims 3, 5-6 and 11 as follows:

1-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently amended) ~~The head as defined in claim 1~~ A head for reading and writing data from and to a magnetic tape, comprising:

a first elongated chip assembly fixedly adhered to a second elongated chip assembly;

a tape running surface formed in the longitudinal direction of said first and second chip assemblies;

a read/write gap line for supporting a read/write element extending longitudinally along said tape running surface on each of said first and second chip assemblies; and

at least one groove formed on each side of said read/write gap line on each of said first and second chip assemblies and extending substantially parallel to said read/write gap line,

wherein each of said grooves has a width which is greater than or equal to a width of an entire wall separating said grooves on both sides of each said read/write gap line, and a depth which is greater than or equal to said width of said grooves,

wherein said tape running surface of said first and second chip assemblies has a curved portion along respective circular lines having respective centers which are offset a predetermined distance from a center line where said first and second chip assemblies are joined.

4. (Previously presented) The head as defined in claim 3 wherein said depths of said grooves are measured from a top of said curved portion of said tape running surface of corresponding said first and second chip assemblies, to a bottom of said grooves.

5. (Currently amended) The head as defined in claim 4 wherein each of said first and second chip assemblies includes a first block having a substantially planar first surface and a second block having first and second surfaces, said first surface of said first block being attached to said first surface of said second block, and said second surface of said second block of said first chip assembly is adhered to said second surface of said second block of said second chip assembly.

6. (Currently amended) ~~The head as defined in claim 5~~ A head for reading and writing data from and to a magnetic tape, comprising:  
a first elongated chip assembly fixedly adhered to a second elongated chip assembly;

a tape running surface formed in the longitudinal direction of said first and second chip assemblies;

a read/write gap line for supporting a read/write element extending longitudinally along said tape running surface on each of said first and second chip assemblies; and

at least one groove formed on each side of said read/write gap line on each of said first and second chip assemblies and extending substantially parallel to said read/write gap line,

wherein each of said grooves has a width which is greater than or equal to a width of an entire wall separating said grooves on both sides of each said read/write gap line, and a depth which is greater than or equal to said width of said grooves,

wherein each of said first and second chip assemblies includes a first block having a substantially planar first surface and a second block having first and second surfaces, said first surface of said first block being attached to said first surface of said second block, and said second surface of said second block of said first chip assembly is adhered to said second surface of said second block of said second chip assembly, and

wherein said read/write gap line on each of said first and second chip assemblies is formed in an area where said first block and said second block are joined.

7. (Original) The head as defined in claim 6 wherein said first block and said second block of said first chip assembly have substantially the same width, and said first block and said second block of said second chip assembly have substantially the same width.

8. (Original) The head as defined in claim 7 wherein said first chip assembly has substantially the same width as said second chip assembly.

9. (Previously presented) The head as defined in claim 6 wherein a width of said first block of said first chip assembly is greater than a width of said second block of said first chip assembly, and a width of said first block of said second chip assembly is greater than a width of said second block of said second chip assembly.

10. (Previously presented) The head as defined in claim 9 wherein each of said first and second chip assemblies includes one said groove formed on said second block and two said grooves on said first block.

11. (Currently amended) The head as defined in claim ~~4~~3 wherein each of said first and second chip assemblies includes one said groove formed on a first side of said read/write gap line and two said grooves formed on a second side of said read/write gap line.

12-15. (Cancelled)